



Special Joint Meeting of the
City Council and School Committee
Thursday, October 9, 2014
6:00pm

JFK Middle School Community Room
100 Bridge Road, Florence, MA

Pursuant to Article 4, Section 4-6 of the City Charter a special joint meeting of the City Council and School Committee is convened for the purpose of filling the vacant Ward 2 School Committee seat.

1. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. Mayor David J. Narkewicz presided over the meeting. The Mayor reminded the Council and Committee members, as well as the public, the purpose of the special meeting as defined above.

Roll Call:

Councilor/School Committee Member	Status
Councilor Jesse Adams	Present
Councilor Maureen Carney	Present
Councilor William Dwight	Present
Councilor Alisa Klein	Present
Councilor Marianne LaBarge	Present
Councilor David Murphy	Present
Councilor Ryan O'Donnell	Present
Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra	Present
Councilor Paul Spector	Absent
Member Blue DuVal	Present
Member Pam Hannah	Present
Member Ann Hennessey	Present
Member Downey Meyer	6:08 pm arrival
Member Lisa Minnick	Present
Member Howard Moore	Present
Mayor David Narkewicz	Present
Member Kari Nykorchuk	Present
Member Edward Zuchowski	Present
Total Present	17
Total Absent	1

2. Announcement of Audio/Video Recording of Meeting

Mayor Narkewicz announced that the meeting is being video and audio taped by Northampton Community Television.

The Mayor described the process for selecting a new Ward 2 School Committee person:

- Each candidate is asked to make a 3 minute introductory statement. Directly following, the candidate is asked questions by city council and school committee members. The question period is 10 minutes; a timer is maintained by the Chair.
- After each candidate has made his or her introductory statement and has responded to questions, nominations for the candidates are accepted from the floor. Nominations are then closed and a Roll Call voting process begins. Each Joint Committee Member is asked to state the name of the candidate they favor. If no one candidate receives a majority of the votes after completion of the first round of voting, then the person receiving the lowest number of votes is eliminated and a second round of voting is taken. The winning candidate must receive a minimum of 9 votes, as there are 17 voting members present.

3. Introductory Statement by each Candidate (3 minutes each) & Questions from City Councilors & School Committee Members to Candidates (10 min. per candidate)

There are three candidates, all Ward two residents, who have asked to be nominated for the Ward 2 School Committee seat. The order of statements heard is alphabetical.

A. Laura Fallon:

Introduction: In preparation for the commitment as School Committee Member, Ms. Fallon offered that she worked hard to understand the concerns of the school, the workings of the School Administration and its governance and best practices of the education industry. Her preparation and life experience includes:

- Background in education, experience in override campaign, and parent of four;
- Preparation: Ms. Fallon studied the school's budget, cherry sheets & other school committee documents, plus the superintendent's entry plan, blog & school handbooks, common core frameworks, and course offerings at middle & high schools.
- Ms. Fallon reviewed Common Core , Understanding By Design Frameworks & Differentiation in the Brain;

Overall Ms. Fallon feels that the Northampton school district is in a great place; she recognizes that the school committee has already adopted best practices for governance; that Northampton has a Superintendent who has a clear vision and plan; and that the Public School system offers dedicated teachers and staff. She also recognizes that Northampton is a very supportive community when it comes to education.

During the question/answer portion, Ms. Fallon offered the following:

- She feels that the role of a school committee member is to select the Superintendant of schools and work to support the vision and goals of that person.

- She recognizes that decision making on behalf of a community is sometimes difficult work and she does not take this responsibility lightly.
- Her experience as a volunteer is primarily for Jackson St. School as a field trip chaperone and classroom teacher's aide. She has also volunteered to raise money for class field trips.
- She worked actively on the campaign to support the Prop 2-1/2 override. In the process, she learned a lot about the community. Going door-to-door to raise awareness about the budget, she gained broader insight regarding the diversity of Northampton's community.
- Ms. Fallon chose NPS for her children; enjoys the diversity NPS offers.

B. Jason Foster

Introduction: Mr. Foster feels that unique skills and experiences of every School Committee Member are important for the entire Board to be effective. He expressed a love for developing effective budgets and finding efficient use of funds. He feels his expertise in this area is a positive addition to the current School Committee. Mr. Foster has twenty five years experience expanding revenue while minimizing expenses. This is done through contract negotiation, procurement, operational efficiencies, employee benefits and strategic development. He will use his financial disciplines and insights to advocate for funding.

As a martial arts instructor, Mr. Foster has experience looking at other elements that affect a child's overall school experience. This includes bullying, focus, economic hardship, respect, self-esteem and emotional stability. Mr. Foster looks forward to maintaining an objective focus to support the interests of all students in the school community.

During the question/answer portion, Mr. Foster offered the following:

- Mr. Foster believes his experience as a YMCA Board Member has helped him to become a better collaborator. He feels that this will be a necessary skill to have as an elected official of the School Committee.
- Mr. Foster feels that standardized tests are great to have as a baseline, however, they should be used as a tool to create better policies and practices that address the needs of all of the students.
- Mr. Foster has had a unique advantage of having children in both private and public school. Along with the School Committee, Mr. Foster would like the opportunity to examine best practices of both school settings in order to create an effective school program that works for every student.
- Regarding transportation, Mr. Foster feels that paying for transportation to school should be the same for everyone.
- Mr. Foster would seek re-election if he is effective in his role.

C. Renee Wetstein

Introduction: Ms. Wetstein moved from Easthampton to Northampton so her children would have the benefit of the Northampton School System. In 2011, Ms.

Wetstein took out nominations for School Committee Member; however, she chose to let Mr. Shelffo run unopposed. Her experience includes member of the School Council. Ms. Wetstein started the Northampton Key Club and she is still an advisor to the Club even today. She is a family attorney for 25 years. Her practice specializes in families in transition and adoptions. Ms. Wetstein was appointed to High School Principal Selection Committee by former Superintendent Brian Salzer.

During the question/answer portion, Ms. Wetstein offered the following:

- As a member of the School Council, Ms. Wetstein has experience in helping to put together a school budget.
- Ms. Wetstein is a former volunteer at the elementary school level. She participated in class field trips and worked directly in the classroom.
- Ms. Wetstein is a proponent for the late start time initiative. She has ideas for how to have a later start time while offering expanded opportunities for later learning.
- Ms. Wetstein believes that Community Service is an important part of learning.
- Ms. Wetstein would commit to running for School Committee when this shortened term expires.

4. Nominations

Mayor Narkewicz opened the floor for nominations.

- School Committee member Ann Hennessey nominated candidate Laura Fallon, Edward Zuchowski seconded the motion.
- School Committee member Blue DuVal nominated candidate Renee Wetstein, Marianne LaBarge seconded.
- Councilor Bill Dwight nominated candidate Jason Foster, Blue DuVal seconded the motion.

Councilor Maureen Carney moved to close the nominations, Councilor Jesse Adams seconded the motion. Nominations were closed on a voice vote of 17 Yes, 0 No.

5. Roll Call Vote:

	Candidate Laura Fallon	Candidate Jason Foster	Candidate Renee Wetstein
Councilor Jesse Adams			√
Councilor Maureen Carney	√		
Councilor William Dwight	√		
Councilor Alisa Klein	√		
Councilor Marianne LaBarge			√
Councilor David Murphy			√
Councilor Ryan O'Donnell	√		
Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra	√		
Councilor Paul Spector (absent)			
Member Blue DuVal	√		
Member Pam Hannah	√		
Member Ann Hennessey	√		
Member Downey Meyer			√
Member Lisa Minnick	√		
Member Howard Moore			√
Mayor David Narkewicz			√
Member Kary Nykorchuk			√
Member Edward Zuchowski	√		
Total Votes	10	0	7

Mayor Narkewicz thanked all three candidates for coming forward to express their interest in serving as a Ward 2 School Committee Person.

6. Announcement of Winning Candidate

With 10 official votes, Laura Fallon, is declared the winner and becomes the newest School Committee member. Ms. Fallon will complete the term replacing former School Committee Member Andrew Shelffo.

7. New Candidate Takes Oath

At 6:57 pm, Laura Fallon is sworn in as the new Ward 2 School Committee member by City Clerk, Wendy Mazza.

8. Adjourn

At 6:58pm, School Committee Member Blue DuVal moved to adjourn the meeting; City Councilor Marianne LaBarge seconded the motion. The motion passed on a voice vote of 17 Yes, 0 No.